



World Christian Fellowship

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Part 2 Between Death and Judgement

Many people think that their soul as an immortal entity within them that goes on living after death. What does the Bible say?

Genesis 2:7, *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils **the breath of life**; and man became a living being.*

God did not put a soul into man. He formed the body from the dust of the ground, and then He breathed His life-giving spirit into the lifeless body the result was a soul, or a living being.

When a person dies, the reverse takes place. The breath of life departs from the body, and the soul.

Ecclesiastes 12:7, *Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, **And the spirit will return to God who gave it.***

At the resurrection, God reunites the body and His life giving spirit and the person lives again.

Only God is immortal humans are not! If souls existed as separate entities that lived on after we died, that would mean we have immortality.

1 Timothy 6:15-16, *which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honour and everlasting power. Amen.*

The word “mortal” according to the dictionary, means “subject to death.”

“Immortal,” of course, means “not subject to death.”

Immortal or immortality appears in the bible only twice and both times it denotes only to God.

1 Timothy 1:17, *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

We, humans, do not have the immortality.

Romans 2:7, *eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honour, and immortality;*

So you won't be seeking something if you had got it already.

Job 4:17, *'Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker?*

Two destinies for two different types of people.

John 5:28-29, *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

So those who are in Christ will rise to new life! Those who are not His will rise to judgement for punishment.

No escape! Everyone will be raised after their death! But to different destiny!!

Each of us will leave our earthly bodies in the grave and our disembodied souls will go immediately into the presence of God or into Hades. Our destination is determined purely by our acceptance or rejection of God through our faith in Jesus Christ.

For the Saved:

When the saved die, they go directly into the presence of the Lord.

Luke 23:43, *And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”*

The Greek word used here is ‘*paradeisos*’ meaning

“Among the Persians a grand enclosure or preserve, hunting ground, park, shady and well-watered” in other words its “a garden, pleasure ground”

Paradise is a temporary holding place for all the believers until the resurrection.

This would seem to contradict the teaching called “soul-sleep,” which implies that at death a believer “sleeps” in a kind of suspended animation until the day of the resurrection. (Will see a detailed study next week)

How could the thief be that very day in paradise if his soul went to sleep when he died?

At the moment of death the believer passes immediately into the personal presence of Jesus Christ. This is our hope and comfort as we stand at the graveside of a loved one.

2 Corinthians 5:8, *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

Philippians 1:23, *For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.*

Apostle Paul was looking forward to the personal presence of Jesus Christ.

So Paradise is not the destination but it's just a passing place. Like a garden in the Kings courtyard until we reach the palace.

While Paradise is NOT now a part of Sheol/Hades it will be mentioned here because it was located in Sheol/Hades at one

time. Before the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ everybody who died went to Sheol/Hades, which was at that time divided into at least two compartments. One was a place of torment while the other was a place of blessing, which was referred to as Abraham's Bosom.

Luke 16:22-25, *So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.*

Another lesson we will study about Sheol/Hades and Tartarus later when we look at the resurrection of the unsaved.

Ephesians 4:9, *(Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)*

We know that Jesus Christ went into the lower parts of the earth, that is to Sheol/Hades, "in the heart of the earth," for three days and nights while his body was in the grave

Matthew 12:40, *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

The Lord Jesus told the repentant thief that he would join Him in Paradise that same day.

Luke 23:42-43, ⁴² *Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."* ⁴³ *And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

This makes us to understand abundantly clear that Paradise was located in Sheol/Hades at that time. This is the same thing mentioned as Abraham Bosom in Luke 16.

However, after Jesus Christ rose from the dead He ascended to the Father, taking the saints who were in Abraham's Bosom to be with Him. Thus, He took "captivity captive"

Ephesians 4:8-10, ⁸ *Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."* ⁹ *(Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?* ¹⁰ *He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)*

That Paradise was moved from there is confirmed to us by the Apostle Paul who speaks of a man who was “caught up into Paradise” where he “heard unspeakable words”

2 Corinthians 12:3-4, ³ *And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—* ⁴ *how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

With Jesus Christ’s work complete, the believers who had been confined to Sheol/Hades were now taken to Paradise to wait in God’s presence until the time of their resurrection to enter His Kingdom on Earth. Since that time, at death all believers go to Paradise to await the time of their resurrection.

This can be explained to us from the scriptures how Jesus told His disciples about His return. Remember the Jewish traditions of marriage.

Jesus is coming back to take us to be with Him.

John 14:1-4, *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.”* ² *In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.* ³ *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.* ⁴ *And where I go you know, and the way you know.”*

So the bridegroom is preparing place for His bride, the church and He will come and take us to be with Him.

It will only be part of the experience we will have one day when Jesus returns to earth and resurrects the bodies of those who are already with Him in spirit. While He's at it, He'll bring those of us who are still alive home as well:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And **the dead in Christ will rise first.** ¹⁷Then we **who are alive and remain shall be caught up together** with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

- The dead will raise first
- The living will caught up second
- We dead will receive a new body
- The living bodies will be changed in a twinkling of an eye.

After the resurrection our joy and satisfaction be made complete. Only then will we be able to experience the full physical, spiritual and emotional joy we were originally designed for.

1 Corinthians 15:50-55, ⁵⁰*Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.* ⁵¹*Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—* ⁵²*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the **dead will be raised incorruptible**, and we shall be changed.* ⁵³*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this **mortal must put on immortality**.* ⁵⁴*So when this **corruptible has put on incorruption**, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”* ⁵⁵*“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”*

We won't be able to enter into the presence of God with this corruptible body.

From mortality we will be changed into immortality.

Body that is perfect in every way free from the evidence of death and decay in this life our bodies wear out. But when we are raised, it will be with bodies that can never decay, never wear out, never suffer injury, never grow old, never get sick, and thank God, never die.

The prophets never mention in the Bible that the righteous immediately go to heaven or the wicked go to hell when they die. Neither did Jesus and His apostles teach it. When Jesus was about to leave His disciples,

John 11:25-26, *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”*²⁶ *And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”*

- Jesus said that the dead will raise and live!
- The one who is living will never die, they will be changed in twinkling of an eye.

Here are some of the images the Bible uses for the death of a Christian:

- going to sleep and waking up in heaven
- moving from a tent to a mansion
- walking from the darkness into a well-lit room
- coming home to see your family and friends
- being set free from prison
- taking a long journey to a new land
- riding a chariot to the New Jerusalem
- moving into a brand-new home
- opening a gate to a brand-new world

What is ahead for us when we die?

Our soul goes into the conscious presence of the Lord.

Our body is buried until the day of resurrection.

When Christ returns, we will be raised bodily from the grave.

Body and soul reunited, we will be with the Lord forever.

“Have a good time at my funeral, because I’m not going to be there.”

Psalms 116:15, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.